

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ALGIER 02319 301011Z

63

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /078 W

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R 300758Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5209

INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 2319

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, AG, SS, MO

SUBJECT: SAHARA: ALGERIAN VIEW OF DIPLOMATIC SITUATION

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY POLITICAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR
CONTENDED SEPTEMBER 29 THAT ALGERIAN DIPLOMATIC POSITION
IN SAHARA STRONG SINCE NON-ALIGNED, UN AND OAU ALL
RECOGNIZED THAT PROBLEM WAS REAL ONE REQUIRING JUST AND
DURABLE SOLUTION. MOROCCAN CONTENTION THAT CASE WAS
CLOSED INCREASINGLY UNVIALE IN HIS VIEW. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING COURSE OF TOUR D'HORIZON SEPTEMBER 29 (OTHER
SUBJECTS SEPTELS), FOREIGN MINISTRY POLITICAL AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR ADJALI TOLD ME THAT HE WAS WELL SATISFIED WITH
SAHARA DIPLOMATIC SITUATION FOLLOWING COLOMBO NON-
ALIGNED SUMMIT. CONTRARY TO SOME REPORTS, COLOMBO
SUMMIT HAD NOT BEEN DIVIDED ON SAHARA ISSUE SINCE ALL
(BUT MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS) AGREED THAT SAHARA
WAS PRESSING PROBLEM WHICH DEMANDED A JUST AND
DURABLE SOLUTION. GENERAL RECOGNITION THAT
PROBLEM EXISTED WAS OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE FOR
ALGERIANS. CONVERSELY, MOROCCAN CONTENTION
THAT SAHARA PROBLEM NO LONGER EXISTED HAD CLEARLY
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PAGE 02 ALGIER 02319 301011Z

BEEN REJECTED.

3. SECOND SUCCESS, ADJALI ASSERTED, WAS REFERRAL OF PROBLEM TO OAU. MOROCCANS, HE NOTED, HAD TRIED AND FAILED TO SEIZE ARAB LEAGUE OF QUESTION. SAHARA PROBLEM, HE ARGUED SOMEWHAT VAGUELY, WAS POLITICAL AND NOT SIMPLY ARAB. WITH RESPECT TO OAU, RESOLUTION TAKEN AT PORT LOUIS SUMMIT HADNOT OVERTURNED THAT PASSED AT FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL, AND SUMMIT RESOLUTION HAD MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO NEED FOR SAHRAOUI SELF-DETERMINATION.

4. UN, ADJALI INSISTED, COULD NOT FAIL TO BE SEIZED OF SAHARA PROBLEM. BOTH SECRETARY GENERAL AND PRESIDENT OF COMMITTEE OF 24 WERE CHARGED WITH DEALING WITH IT.

5. TURNING TO MOROCCANS, ADJALI NOTED SMILINGLY THAT DIPLOMATIC HAND RABAT HAD BEEN DEALT IN SAHARA SHOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO PLAY. AFTER ALL, ALGERIANS NOT MAKING TERRITORIAL CLAIM AND WILLING TO ACCEPT ANY SORT OF POLITICAL SOLUTION, INCLUDING INTEGRATION OF TERRITORY INTO MOROCCO, PROVIDED SAHRAOUI WISHES TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION.

6. DESPITE THIS SITUATION, MOROCCAN ACTIONS IN SAHARA HAVE MADE THEIR POSITION DIFFICULT. EVEN AS THEY ASSERTED THAT SAHARA FILE CLOSED, THEY WERE ADMITTING TO SIGNIFICANT LOSSES OF MEN AND MATERIEL, AND PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR AND NON-GOVERNMENT POLITICIAN BOUABID HAD EVEN GONE SO FAR AS TO INSIST THAT WAR VIRTUALLY INEVITABLE. (ADJALI WONDERED IN PASSING HOW A MAN SUCH AS BOUABID, WHO PROFESSED TO BE IN OPPOSITION, COULD BILL HIMSELF AT COLOMBO AS A COUNSELOR TO KING.) MOROCCANS ALSO EMBARRASSED BY REFUGEES WHO THEY FIRST CLAIMED WHERE FLEEING SPANISH COLONIALISM AND THEN ASSERTED WERE BEING HELD PRISONER IN ALGERIA.

7. COMMENT: ADJALI'S ADROIT PRESENTATION PUTS ALGERIAN DIPLOMATIC POSITION IN SAHARA IN BEST
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PAGE 03 ALGIER 02319 301011Z

POSSIBLE LIGHT. REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER GOA WILL BE ABLE TO TRANSLATE ALLEGED BROAD COMMITMENT TO SAHRAOUI SELF-DETERMINATION INTO TOUGH UNGA RESOLUTION. WE SUSPECT HE WHISTLING IN DARK.PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SITUATION, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ALGIER02319
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760369-0856
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976095/aaaaadip.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2004 by woolflhd>; APPROVED <15 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SAHARA: ALGERIAN VIEW OF DIPLOMATIC SITUATION
TAGS: PFOR, PORG, AG, SS, MO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006